

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 10

Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

July, 1991

WOMEN SURVIVORS OF ABUSE FIGHT BACK

One thousand women a year are imprisoned in the u.s. for murder or manslaughter because they killed an abusing husband or boyfriend. In fear for their lives or their children, 75-90% of women who kill batterers are convicted even when evidence of abuse is admitted. Courts rarely recognize a prior battering herstory, and generally rule out any evidence of abuse that would support a woman's claim of self defense.

In February, Governor William Schaefar of Maryland granted clemency to 8 women convicted of killing or assaulting men who abused them. He reviewed dozens of cases, and decided that most of the women acted in self-defense. The criminal court had not sufficiently recognized this at the time of their trials.

Legislation is being considered in several states to assure a woman's right to introduce evidence of abusive patterns by a spouse or domestic partner in a plea of self-defense.

JUDY CLARK BARRED FROM AIDS PROJECT

Judy Clark, a lesbian political prisoner who is in prison at bedford hills correctional facility for Women in new york, has recently been barred by the prison administration from any participation in the AIDS project that she helped found. AIDS Counseling and Education, ACE, is a peer support and education group. This action culminated over a year of harassment, as greater and greater restrictions were placed on Judy's ability to participate in ACE.

Judy had been locked down for two years in the late '80's by the same prison administration. She was arrested in 1980 in connection with the brinks case in nyack, new york. Because she is an out lesbian who took a stand to support Black liberation in practice as well as theory, she was sentenced to over 90 years and has faced continual harassment from prison authorities.

In addition to Judy's being barred from ACE, a teacher from Mercy College who has taught at the prison for the last five years, was fired for "becoming too close" to Judy.

The administration of bedford hills has received a lot of praise for "permitting" ACE to function. Judy's supporters are asking that letters be sent to superintendent elaine lord, to protest Judy's exclusion from ACE and to request that she be allowed to continue her work. Write to:

Superintendent Elaine Lord
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 1000
Bedford Hills, New York 10507

Copies should be sent to Judy's attorney:

Elizabeth Koob
150 Nassau Street
New York, New York 10038

Out of Control would like to thank the Resist foundation for a grant of \$600 received in June to help with the costs of the newsletter. Donations to Resist are tax deductible. If you want to either give them money or ask them for it, their address is Resist/ One Summer St./ Somerville, MA 02143-9990.

ABUSED WOMEN DOING TIME FOR FIGHTING BACK

HAZEL KONTOS was sentenced to life in Birmingham Alabama, for shooting her husband who beat her and once held her at gun point.

JANICE PAINTER was sentenced to life in Tacoma, Washington for killing her 28-year old stepson, who had hospitalized her and raped her daughter.

JAUNITA THOMAS was convicted on June 20, 1980 of first degree murder and given a life sentence for stabbing the man who had battered her for six years. During the trial the prosecutor aroused the racism of the all-white jury by stereotyping Black people as violent and Black women as immoral.

While many Americans wave flags of allegiance, and the straight media continues its barrage of lies and cover-up as to what really happened in the Persian Gulf, we lend our support to the true heroes of the Racist/Imperialist war--those who refused to go. RESISTANCE IS NOT A CRIME! AMNESTY FOR ALL MILITARY RESISTERS!

NORMA JEAN CROY UPDATE

Attorney James S. Thomson of sacramento will be filing a petition for a writ of habeas corpus for Norma Jean Croy in the near future. The writ will be presenting the new evidence that resulted in last year's acquittal of her brother, Patrick Hooty Croy. It is hoped that the judge will grant an evidentiary hearing to determine whether Norma should get a new trial. How long it will take for the judge to make that decision is not known, but it is expected that some action will occur within a few months.

Norma is scheduled to appear before the parole board next May. This will be her fifth appearance. At the last hearing, which took place a few weeks after her brother's acquittal, the parole board refused to consider the new evidence. It is not expected that the board will change this position. However, she will continue to apply for parole. Supporters will be notified next spring as to how they can help.

Supporters who want to be kept advised of the developments in Norma's case should send their names and addresses to the defense committee at 473 Jackson St., 3rd floor, San Francisco, CA 94111.

You can write to Norma Jean Croy at CCWF B080701/ P.O. Box 1508/ Chowchilla, CA 93610 (she likes to be called Norm).

the "WAR" in prison

Laura Whitehorn reported on an incident from FCI Lexington (yes this is the infamous control unit place but fortunately she is in general population): During the recent war against Iraq, while prisoners were watching t.v. news & discussing the war; a guard & a counselor came in to voice their support for the war. The prisoners were told just how lucky they were to live in a country with so many freedoms; where men like them could achieve the great success of being prison staff.

In response Laura voiced her opposition to the u.s. invasion & the other prisoners pointed out to these white men that their being white & male might have contributed to their career success. The women went on to quietly discuss among themselves what it's like to grow up as an African American woman in the u.s.

POLICE HARASS GERONIMO DEMO

On Tuesday, July 9, 1991, there was a Geronimo Pratt demonstration at the State Building in San Francisco. Black supporters who were walking the picket line were picked off by state police and arrested. Targeted were Black children and women. Some men were arrested later on. Geronimo has been granted a hearing at the end of August on allegations that he is being harassed and abused at Tehachapi state prison. Stay tuned for more details.

LEGAL NOTES and corpses

SF Chronicle, 6/6/91

"A U.S. district judge in San Francisco is expected today to order an investigation of Soledad prison to determine whether conditions have deteriorated to the point of cruel and unusual punishment..."

SF Chronicle, 6/18/91

"The Supreme Court yesterday made it harder for prisoners to challenge the conditions of their confinement, ruling that over-crowding, rat-infested kitchens and bad food are not enough to prove that inmates are living under inhumane conditions that constitute cruel and unusual punishment."

July 5, 1991

Three prisoners at Vacaville were murdered by neglect. They were on Haldol, a psychotropic drug that causes dehydration. Their bodies were unable to deal with the 100 degree plus heat. There was no air-conditioning in the cells, they were only given one extra glass of water a day, and they weren't given extra showers, which would help them to cool down.

Vacaville gained fame in the 1960's and 70's for their experiments with mind control drugs and other forms of torture, including electric shocks to the genitals to encourage gay men to change their sexual orientation.

Shortly thereafter, Laura was sternly lectured for voicing her opinion to staff & threatened with segregation for inciting a riot. She was told if she ever again tried to "rile up the girls" by voicing her "off the wall" opinions about u.s. policy she would be sent to the hole for sure. They went on to tell her "some people" think she should be in segregation anyway just because of her charges (she is one of the Resistance Conspiracy 6 doing 20 yrs. for "conspiracy" to resist the u.s. government's domestic & foreign policy).

She was also told "there are 3 things you don't discuss in prison...sex, religion & politics. For instance, "if you are gay, you don't try to win others over to your way". (Laura is an out lesbian so obviously the threat meant to cover several levels of who she is).

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR DONALD TAYLOR

Donald Taylor, an African American political prisoner died this spring from complications due to a delayed diagnosis of colon cancer. A memorial service was held in Chicago at the Operation Push chapel on June 21, 1991. Bo did time with him in MCC Chicago in 1981, and she sent this statement to his memorial.

"No matter what the situation, Don T. was always a fine human being and an honorable person. He didn't freak out cuz i was a dyke. He understood that we shared a common enemy who was pleased by all division among the people. We were comrades. This does not mean that we never had differences, but when they came along, we dealt with them with respect toward each other. i learned valuable lessons from our solidarity and day to day practice. Thanks Don T. for being you..."

LAWYER FREED

A lawyer jailed for refusing to testify about a client was freed after six months. Linda Backiel was ordered imprisoned by a judge in Pennsylvania for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating Betty Ann Duke, a revolutionary who jumped bail in October of 1985. Duke is wanted in connection with the bombing of the u.s. Capitol. "It has been a very precious learning experience," Backiel said about her time in prison. "I wouldn't trade it for the world. I feel both the judge and the u.s. attorney wanted to make an example of me. I feel I made an example of myself, an example of conscience."

Linda told reporters that she would go to jail again to defend her principles. Hooray Linda. Hooray Betty Ann.

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